this book has been printed by a private publisher from Saharanpur. This private publisher had printed, as a first edition, 1000 copies of this book for English medium students of class VI for History/Civics. On receipt of a complaint from Jamiat Ulema-e-Hind, the objectionable portions of the book along with the sketch have been deleted. As soon as NCERT noticed a related newsitem in the newspapers, it issued a Press statement, clarifying the position.

Meanwhile, Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India has written to the Government of Uttar Pradesh, suggesting action under the Criminal Procedure Code. The Government of Uttar Pradesh has since reported that action has been taken to confiscate and burn the books.

Ban on the Use of Plastic Bags

*93. SHRI SANTOSH BAGRODIA: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government plan to stop the use of plastic bags completely; if so, when;

(b) whether it is a fact that plastic packing material not only hurts the environment in the cities, but also in the villages; and

(c) whether Government are aware that many cows ate large quantities of plastic bags due to hunger and died because of poison?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI BABU LAL MARANDI):

(a) There are no immediate plant to stop the use of plastic bags completely. The Ministry of Environment and Forests have issued the Recycled Plastics Manufacture and Usage Rules, 1999 on 2.9.99. These rules prohibit use of carrybags and containers made of recycled plastic for storing,carrying, dispensing or packaging of foodstuffs and do not impose a complete ban on the manufacture and use of plastic carrybags.

(b) Littering of plastic packing material is considered to be harmful to the environment in the cities, as well as in the villages, due to their non-biodegradable nature, their propensity to clog the sewers and cause contamination of soil and groundwater. Certain colourants and pigments used as additives during manufacture of recycled plastic bags can leach out thereby contaminating food items stored and packed in such bags. Consumption of such food items can be harmful to human beings and animals.

(c) The Government does not have any concrete information regarding death of cows due to swallowing of plastic bags. However, a few reports of stray cows ingesting plastic bags with waste food with harmful consequences have come to notice.